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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## SELECTMEN

AND

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE,

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE

### Town of Montague.

1880-1.

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1880-81

MONTAGUE, MASS.:

ECIL T. BAGNALL, TURNERS FALLS, MASS.

1881.



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MONTAGUE, MASS.:

PRINTED BY CECIL T. BAGNALL, TURNERS FALLS, MASS.

1881,



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## TREASURER'S REPORT.

J. H. ROOT, TREASURER, IN ACCOUNT WITH THE TOWN OF  
MONTAGUE.

	DR.
To Cash on hand Feb. 15, 1880,	\$994 46
“ Balance due on Taxes, 1879,	50 00
“ “ “ “ “ 1878,	500 00
“ “ “ “ “ 1879,	1805 87
“ Cash received of Town of Northfield,	8 00
“ “ “ “ “ Greenfield,	241 22
“ “ “ “ “ Gill,	340 00
“ “ “ “ Emery Ball,	45 30
“ “ “ “ J. H. Brown,	230 00
“ “ “ “ Daniel Buckley,	23 75
“ “ “ “ Clark Machine Co.,	25 00
“ “ “ “ Rent of Lecture Room,	30 00
“ “ “ “ State for Corporation Tax,	579 12
“ “ “ “ “ Bank Tax,	773 39
“ “ “ “ “ State aid,	577 00
“ “ “ “ “ State Paupers,	62 00
“ “ “ “ “ Relief of Indigent Soldiers	12 00
“ “ “ “ “ School Fund,	230 58
“ “ “ “ County for Dog Fund,	170 50
“ “ “ “ “ Licenses,	1850 00
“ “ “ “ “ Borrowed Money,	3000 00
“ Amount of Tax bill for 1880,	34955 22
“ Interest on Taxes, 1878,	2 00
“ “ “ “ “ 1879,	31 60
“ D. C. Bangs, overlayings,	37 50
	<hr/>
	\$46574 51

Amount forward, \$46574 51

	CR.	
By Paid State Tax,	\$1725 00	
“ County Tax,	3194 44	
“ Bank Tax,	2672 13	
“ State aid,	662 00	
“ Licenses,	462 50	
“ Borrowed Money,	3000 00	
“ Town Note,	5000 00	
“ Interest on Town Loan,	1787 50	
“ School Committee's Orders,	8611 93	
“ Selectmen's Orders,	16423 81	
“ Balance due on Taxes, 1879,	75 00	
“ “ “ “ “ 1880,	2800 22	
“ Cash on Hand,	159 98	
	<hr/>	
		\$46574 51

J. H. ROOT, TREASURER.

## SCHOOLING.

## COMMITTEE'S ACCOUNT.

Appropriation,	\$8000 00
From State School Fund,	230 58
	<hr/>
	\$8230 58

## DISBURSEMENTS.

Wages,	\$6292 35
Fuel,	491 70
Repairs,	463 53
Care of Houses,	413 84
Supplies.—Charts, Books, Crayons,	
Erasers, &c.,	264 52
Transportation,	626 00
Truancy,	60 00
	<hr/>
	\$8611 94

SEYMOUR ROCKWELL, }  
 I. CHENERY, } SCHOOL COMMITTEE.  
 WM. S. DANA, }

## HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES.

## ROAD COMMISSIONERS' ACCOUNT.

Paid for Montague City bridge,	\$477 48	
Eighteenth street bridge,	205 27	
Culvert near Alonzo Burnham's,	125 00	
Repairs Central street culvert,	307 00	
Grading and Culverts, K st., 900 ft.	520 00	
Grading I street,	73 00	
Grading H street, from 10th to 11th,	46 00	
Grading G street to I street,	155 00	
Grading 10th st. from A ave. to R.R.	80 00	
Grading 11th st., from G to I st.,	55 00	
	<hr/>	\$2043 75
Paid for Repairs, Montague City and		
Turners Falls,	\$2300 33	
Repairs Plain Road,	130 00	
Repairs lower suspension bridge,	271 04	
	<hr/>	\$2701 37
Paid for Repairs, R. Clapp, Centre,	\$358 41	
" L. Train, West District,	183 93	
" E. E. Scott, Dry Hill,	66 85	
" T.N.Graves, Chestnut Hill,	55 62	
Plank, bridge timber and railing,	142 49	
	<hr/>	\$807 30
Repairs at Millers Falls,		350 99
Old highway bills throughout town,		65 28
		<hr/>
Total for highways and bridges,		\$5968 69
Town appropriation,	\$6000 00	
Rec'd from Greenfield for suspension bridge,	98 02	
	<hr/>	\$6098 02
Remaining in treasury,		129 33
		<hr/>
		\$6098 02

EDWIN DEMOND,	}	ROAD COMMISSIONERS,
SAM'L E. RIPLEY,		
ALDEN W. GROUT,		



## PAUPERS.

## OVERSEERS' ACCOUNT.

John Commons,	\$52 00	E. C. Coy, medical aid,	50 00
David Pratt Family,	84 02	Patrick Kelly,	15 00
Alanson Root "	109 45	Mrs. Terry,	160 63
Henry Kentfield,	36 00	Mrs. Pearson,	146 32
Clara Lescort,	10 00	Mrs. McCarthy,	127 70
Julia Ware,	10 00	Mrs. Nancy Bissell,	13 50
Christian Early,	12 50	Henry Jarvis,	43 24
Peter Brusco,	5 00	Joseph Jarvis,	13 00
Duffield Sansousi,	14 00	Mrs. Wolf,	59 00
Ada Loveland,	9 00	A. Anthony & wife,	105 47
Thomas White,	15 40	Charles Clark,	7 75
Herbert H. Bowers,	5 00	Dana Cook,	83 20
Lorenzo Brizzee,	20 80	Nathan Stewart,	18 37
Charles Howe,	74 25	Mrs. N. Potter,	13 00
Lucy Tilden,	19 50	Elhannan Britt,	40 00
Ellen Lombard,	5 43	H. B. Graves,	32 00
Ezra Stowell,	182 00	John Carey,	28 30
M'k. (Derrick) Sullivan,	21 75	Mrs. Daniel Leary,	6 00
John E. Squires,	8 00	John Hefline,	9 24
Mrs. E. A. Davis,	24 75	Mrs. Boleo,	96 65
Minnie Burnham,	19 45	Martin McAllister,	18 30
Susanna Grout,	8 00	John Savage,	7 00
Lawson Boy,	33 00	E. A. Britt,	8 00
Andrew Costello and		15 others,	86 38
wife,	249 35	241 Tramps,	68 84
Paid on Town Farm Account,			631 38

---

 \$2916 92

Amount brought forward,		\$2916 92
Town Appropriation,	\$3000 00	
Received from State,	62 00	
Due " "	400 00	
Received for support of Nancy Bissell,	13 50	
" " " John Commons,	48 00	
" " " John Heftline,	9 20	
" " " Susanna Grout,	8 00	
" " " Herbert H. Bowers,	5 00	
Due " " Mrs. Pearson,	146 67	
" " " Mrs. Boleo,	85 80	
" from Ezra Stowell Fund,	230 00	
	<hr/>	\$4008 17
Remaining in Treasury,		1091 25

EDWIN DEMOND,  
 SAML. E. RIPLEY, } OVERSEERS OF POOR.  
 A. W. GROUT.

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## TOWN FARM.

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### OVERSEERS' ACCOUNT.

Received for Old Iron,	\$9 20
" Potatoes,	7 50
" keeping Horse,	14 00
" Milk,	7 10
" Pigs,	30 00
" Pasturing,	33 40
" Beef,	34 53
" Team work at Lake Pleasant,	19 00
" Oats Straw, at Lake Pleasant,	20 00
" Horse keeping at Lake Pleasant,	126 75
" Care of Henry Sparks,	25 00
" " James O'Conner,	67 50
" " Assenath Ferrell,	2 20
Received from New London Railroad,	20 00
" " Town Treasurer,	631 38
	<hr/>
	\$1047 56

Amount received for Paupers brought forward, \$1047 56

Paid M. C. Spencer, balance of salary,	\$72 83	
Paid Chas. Wood and wife for services.	204 14	
Paid for Yearling,	6 00	
“ Help in House,	118 50	
“ “ on Farm,	18 00	
“ Repair of Farming Tools,	8 21	
“ Lumber for Ice House,	26 09	
“ Groceries,	210 23	
“ Clothing,	36 16	
“ Boots and Shoes,	10 15	
“ Medical Services,	11 25	
“ Burial Expenses,	50 08	
“ Soap,	13 00	
“ Meat,	59 51	
“ Ashes and Plaster,	14 50	
“ Blacksmithing,	17 00	
“ Harness,	16 00	
“ Household Goods,	36 67	
“ Crackers and Dried Apples,	14 68	
“ Medicine,	5 20	
“ Making Cider,	4 50	
“ Corn and Meal,	78 87	
“ Farming Tools, &c.,	15 99	
	<hr/>	\$1047 56

#### INVENTORY OF TOWN FARM PROPERTY.

Real Estate,		\$5200 00
Live Stock—2 Horses,	\$110 00	
6 Cows,	170 00	
1 Yearling,	10 00	
2 Calves,	10 00	
6 Shoat,	54 00	
50 Hens,	25 00	
	<hr/>	\$379 00

Produce and Provisions—7 Tons Hay,	\$140 00	
2 “ Corn Fodder,	14 00	
2 “ Rye Straw,	25 00	
14 Bushels Rye,	11 90	
80 “ Corn,	52 00	
200 “ Potatoes,	120 00	
200 Gallons Cider,	18 00	
32 “ Vinegar,	4 00	
2 Bushels Carrots,	1 00	
2 “ Turnips,	1 00	
150 Heads Cabbage,	7 50	
2 Bushels Beans,	3 00	
75 Lbs. Dried Apples,	3 75	
4 Barrels Apples,	4 00	
50 Lbs. Squashes,	1 50	
1 Barrel Soap,	5 00	
25 Lbs. Hard Soap,	1 00	
40 “ Lard,	10 00	
45 “ Butter,	9 90	
$\frac{3}{4}$ Barrel Flour,	5 00	
100 Lbs. Ham,	12 00	
200 “ Beef,	14 00	
165 “ Pork,	16 50	
		<hr/>
		\$480 05
		<hr/>
		\$6059 05
Household Furniture,		450 00
Farming Tools,		300 00
		<hr/>
		\$6809 05
Received from Treasury,	\$631 38	
Interest,	300 00	
		<hr/>
		\$931 38

There has been furnished 517 weeks' board to inmates and lodging for 21 tramps.

EDWIN DEMOND,	}	OVERSEERS OF POOR.
SAML E. RIPLEY,		
ALDEN W. GROUT,		

## SELECTMEN'S ACCOUNT.

## TOWN LOAN.

Cr.

Am't Received of Charles A. Sweet, & Co.,	
10 Notes, \$5000,	50000 00
" Received as Premium on Same,	545 00
" " From Town Treasury,	774 48
	<hr/>
	\$51319 48

Dr.

To Paid Notes at Franklin Saving Inst.	15900 00
" Interest on Same,	176 67
" Taxter Shaw, 3 Notes,	5500 00
" " Interest,	97 40
" Lucretia Bardwell, Note,	3000 00
" " Interest,	27 09
" Philinda Bardwell, Note,	1200 00
" " Interest,	4 80
" Lucy J. Delano, Note,	1075 00
" " Interest,	15 58
" J. A. P. Keyes,	340 00
" " Interest,	32 95
" Crocker National Bank,	20722 30
" " Interest,	34 54
" J. H. Root, Executor, 2 Notes,	2600 00
" " Interest,	64 64
" J. H. Root, Note,	500 00
" " Interest,	28 50
	<hr/>
	\$51319 48

## STATE AND COUNTY TAXES.

State Tax,	\$1725 00
County Tax,	3194 44
	<hr/>
	\$4919 44
Appropriation,	\$4500 00
Deficiency,	419 44
	<hr/>
	\$4919 44

## BANK TAX.

Paid State Treasurer,	\$2672 13
“ Assessing and Collecting,	35 62
	<hr/>
	\$2707 75

## STATE AID.

Paid Military Aid from Mar. 1st, '80, to Mar. 1st, '81,	\$470 00
“ to Indigent Soldiers from Mar. 1st, '80, to Mar. 1st, '81,	192 00
	<hr/>
	\$662 00
Due for Military Aid,	\$546 00
“ “ Indigent Soldiers,	104 00
	<hr/>
	\$650 00

## LOCK UP.

Paid for Lockup Building,	\$1711 87
“ “ Furnishing Lower Room,	80 98
“ “ “ Upper “	261 88
“ “ Furniture and Fixtures,	249 63
	<hr/>
	\$2304 36
Appropriation,	\$1500 00
Deficiency,	804 36
	<hr/>
	\$2304 36

## CONTINGENT EXPENSES.

## TOWN OFFICERS.

Paid J. H. Root, Treasurer,	\$100 00
E. Demond, Selectman and Overseer of Poor,	100 00
S. E. Ripley, “ “ “	100 00
A. W. Grout, “ “ “	100 00
E. Demond, Assessor,	75 00
S. E. Ripley, “	75 00
A. W. Grout, “	75 00
Seymour Rockwell, School Committee,	100 00
Isaac Chenery, “ “	100 00
W. S. Dana, “ “	100 00
E. C. Coy, Board of Health,	10 00
I. Chenery, “ “	10 00
S. E. Ripley, “ “	10 00
E. F. Gunn, part payment as Collector,	150 00
	<hr/>
	\$1105 00

## MISCELLANEOUS.

Paid A. Moore, Moderator,	\$5 00
E. Demond, Travelling Expenses,	55 05
A. W. Grout, " "	1 85
S. E. Ripley, " "	24 75
Aloncy Chenery, care of Library,	50 00
J. A. Tupper, Driving Hearse,	146 00
J. S. Pierce " " old bill,	23 75
Joseph Clapp, " "	40 00
J. G. Eppler, School Books,	53 78
I. Chenery, " "	8 13
W. S. Dana, Introducing new Geography,	198 38
Printing and Advertising,	133 23
Water Rent,	32 85
E. F. Gunn, Collector, Abatements for 1880,	101 31
D. C. Bangs, " " " 1878, '79,	451 20
E. Demond, " " " 1877,	26 21
Mrs. Ware, Abatement on Tax of 1874, 1875,	15 00
S. Hosmer, " " " 1879, 1880,	4 06
Rent Montague City Bridge,	240 00
Insurance on School Houses and Lockup,	73 00
Legal Advice,	16 00
Rice Ferry,	57 32
Turners Falls Library, Dog Fund,	105 95
Montague Centre " "	105 95
D. C. Bangs, Posting Warrants,	4 00
Repairs on Town House,	16 24
H. D. Wheeler, Damage,	4 50
Assessing and Collecting Bank Tax,	35 62
Crocker National Bank, Temporary Interest.	65 87
Tilton & Co., Assessors' Books,	5 75
Gill and Montague Suspension Bridge,	18 00
Postage, Express, Paper, Wood, for Selectmen,	15 30
J. H. Root, Books, Postage, Express, &c.,	24 40
J. H. Root, Recording Births, Deaths and Marriages,	73 72
B. W. Mayo, Local Register,	42 08
Board of Health, Disinfectants,	11 09
Wood, Oil, &c., for Lockup,	28 02
J. H. Root, Note and Interest,	528 50
J. H. Root, ex., bal. Note and Interest,	245 98

Amount brought forward,	\$3087 84	
Paid Police Turners Falls,	1041 00	
Contingent Expenses,	1105 00	
	<hr/>	
	\$5233 84	
Remaining in Treasury,	732 27	
	<hr/>	
	\$5966 11	
Town Appropriation,	\$1500 00	
“ “ Police,	1200 00	
Interest on Taxes,	33 60	
Corporation Tax,	579 12	
Bank Tax,	773 39	
Licenses,	1850 00	
Received for Lecture Room,	30 00	
	<hr/>	
	\$5966 11	

## SUMMARY OF SELECTMEN'S ORDERS.

Paid Police,	1041 00	
Miscellaneous Expenses,	3087 84	
Town Officers,	1105 00	
Lock-up Building,	2304 36	
Highways,	5968 69	
Paupers,	2916 92	
	<hr/>	
	\$16423 81	

## LIABILITIES OF THE TOWN.

Nine \$5000 Notes,	45000 00	
Turners Falls Co., Land for Lockup,	386 00	
	<hr/>	
	\$45386 00	

## ASSETS.

Due for State Aid,	742 00	
“ State Paupers,	400 00	
From J. H. Brown,	513 75	
“ City of Fitchburg,	146 67	
“ Town of Wendell,	90 00	
“ “ Shutesbury,	24 80	
Unpaid Taxes, 1879,	75 00	
“ “ “ 1880,	2800 22	
Cash on Hand,	159 98	
	<hr/>	
	\$4952 42	
Net Town Debt, Mar. 1st, 1880,	45178 76	
“ “ “ “ 1st, 1881,	40333 58	
	<hr/>	

Net decrease the current year, \$4845 18



# ESTIMATED NECESSARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1881.

State and County Taxes,	\$5000 00
Schooling,	8500 00
Interest on Town Debt,	2025 00
Support of Poor,	3000 00
Police,	1200 00
Highways and Bridges,	6000 00
New School House,	3500 00
Incidental Expenses,	1500 00
Town Debt,	5000 00
	<hr/> \$35725 00

Respectfully submitted,

EDWIN DEMOND, } SELECTMEN  
SAML E. RIPLEY, } OF  
ALDEN W. GROUT, } MONTAGUE.

MONTAGUE, FEB. 15, 1881.

We have this day examined the books and accounts of the Treasurer and Selectmen, and find them correctly kept, and the disbursements properly vouched for.

GEO. A. CLAPP, }  
R. N. OAKMAN, } FINANCE COMMITTEE.

## ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## MONTAGUE PUBLIC LIBRARY

FROM FEB. 1st, 1880, TO FEB. 1st, 1881.

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Volumes in Library numbering	1915
Added the past year,	111
Families taking Books,	87
Received from Members,	\$55 14
“ for Catalogues and Paper,	44
“ from Dog Fund,	105 95
Amount expended for Books,	120 50
“ “ “ Rebinding Books,	23 00
“ “ “ Express, Postage, &c.,	2 00
“ “ “ Wood, Lights, &c.,	5 31
Librarian's Salary,	\$50 00

A. CHENERY, Librarian,

Montague, Feb. 10, 1881.

# REPORT

## OF THE

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF MONTAGUE,

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1, 1881.

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To annually make a report to the town and state board is an imperative duty imposed upon school superintendents. If it must be a record of teachers' incompetency and unfaithfulness, of public indifference, or hostility and dissensions between committees and communities, it is indeed a painful undertaking.

We feel grateful that we are spared such an embarrassing necessity. The experiences of the past year have been mainly felicitous. Attendance has been good, teachers have served with fidelity, the community has shown an inclination to tolerate and encourage rather than hinder and complain. Hence, it seems more a privilege than a task, for we have little to say that the people can dislike to hear, and we feel confident that they are disposed to be lenient toward our mistakes, and that they will consider our suggestions with forbearance and candor.

#### SOME OF OUR AUXILIARIES.

We have received services from some individuals whom we cannot conscientiously forbear to mention. The improved attendance at Turners Falls—the attendance of some most in need of school advantages and discipline, and yet most reluctant to obtain and submit to them—is in a great measure due to the fidelity and perseverance of Mr. John Morrison, who has

served most creditably as truant officer for a number of years. He has not only coerced the attendance of obstinate and habitual truants, but also almost eradicated the evil itself. As Goldsmith has it of the schoolmaster of Sweet Auburn,

“ I knew him well as every truant knew.”

If any praise is deserved for whatever of success has been attained in years past, a share of it belongs to Rev. L. S. Parker, whose co-operation and interest manifested by word and work, the courtesy shown to us and encouragement and counsel to teachers and scholars, has been one of our most happy experiences.

After employing our home teachers who were available or seemed desirable, (which has been our purpose,) we depended chiefly upon Prof. J. G. Scott of the Westfield Normal to supply us with graduates from that institution. The truthfulness of his recommendations and the superior class of teachers sent us has placed us under obligations to him which we deem it a privilege and duty to mention in our report.

## THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

At the last annual town meeting a desire was expressed by a vote that the committee should report their expenses so much more in detail as to show the cost of each school separately. Twelve years ago the districts were abolished. There has never been an effort made nor a desire expressed to revert to the district system. The town plan has been universally conceded to be the better. Within the past six years the schools have been divided into two districts or departments; Turners Falls schools comprising one and the remainder the other, which we have styled the Centre. Each department is under a distinct organization and each is pursuing a course of studies believed to be adapted to their respective needs.

Convinced as we are that the abolishment of the district system has been an incalculable blessing, as some facts which we shall mention may have tended to confirm, we have scrupu-

lously avoided everything that might tend to renew and retain their already nearly obliterated boundaries. Cowper depicts the fate of

“Lands intersected by a narrow frith.”

Our interests should be in the schools as a whole,—not partial—not sectional,—not restricted to the one we attended and our children attend. Sentiments like these have dictated in a great measure the manner in which to present our annual account. Besides, in the two departments there are twenty-one schools—in one case three, and in another six—are subject to the same care and warmed by a common fire and fuel. We know no system of accounts that will exactly indicate their respective cost. Every order drawn is in the public records of the town; it seems not in the best taste to compile them in the school report that is sent to the State Board.

### THEN AND NOW.

Perhaps we can consume a little space to no greater satisfaction to ourselves than of comparing the present condition of our schools with those of a dozen years ago, when we emerged from the district system. Those old school houses! What sad commentaries upon the boasts of the time! What telling satires upon the occasional claim of those to whom distance lends them no enchantment, that schools were better then than now! Why, in adding up the brief years it seems we almost make an error of a century! Comfortless shelters! without æsthetic taste or sanitary designs. Embellished only with “the jackknife’s carved initial.” No pictures on the walls, on the desks “no flower told that spring had come.” Their aggregate value as appraised by Messrs. H. W. Rowe, Alpheus Moore and N. E. Babbit, a committee appointed for the purpose, \$5,350. As follows: Center, \$1,500; West, \$900; Northwest, \$300; City, \$1,200; Grouts Corner, \$150; Dry Hill, \$75; Chestnut Hill, \$550; Lafayette, \$150, (where one objection used against the suspension of the school is that the use of the building is lost); South, \$75; Federal street, \$450; Millers River, 0!

To-day \$50,000 would not be an exaggerated estimate of the value of our school buildings. The sum appropriated for schools last year was exactly quadruple that of 12 years ago. Then their organization and classification was accidental, uniformity of studies in different districts was overlooked or impossible to establish, the dull pupil dragged along classed with the bright one, no two schools were alike in number and character of classes and studies pursued.

We show the difference in the schools with a good deal of pride and satisfaction.

Now by consolidation through the suspension of some former small schools and the conveyance of children, they are well graded, uniform in work, distinct in classes, taught by the best teachers procurable; who employ the best methods that modern educators have devised and recommended, public sentiment in harmony with them, and extending good will to teachers and superintendents, the town generously inclined to appropriate material support. Demonstrating that our common school interests have asserted themselves and kept well abreast of the national monopolies, the mills, the banks, the railroads, which are absorbing so much of labor, capital and men, and suggesting to us whether in this direction we have not "builded better than we knew," and whether we are conscious of all the additional cares and responsibilities attendant upon our growth.

### SMALL SCHOOLS.

The small number of pupils in the old west district and the indifference of parents to their attendance has convinced us that we made a mistake in maintaining a school there. There was room and classes at the Centre, and the expense of conveying them would have been considerably less than the sum paid for wages and fuel. The clamor that is often heard when a school is suspended for the good of the many and, perchance, some slight inconvenience of the few, is hardly worth heeding when better provisions can be made for their children else-



where. The tendency to centralize and consolidate, to do away with small schools is auspicious of improved advantages. The demand quite forcibly indicated (by an indictment secured against the town) that one of these small schools shall be kept at Lafayette seems both unreasonable and unjust. The state has assumed authority over children which transcends parental control. It has made it the duty of school officers to make reasonable provisions for the children's attendance and moreover to see that such provisions are complied with. In doing so they cannot be governed by the opinion the caprice the will of individuals. It has always been the unanimous opinion of the committee that the conveyance of the Lafayette pupils to the Centre was far better than yielding to the request of two or three individuals who never visited the schools. The State Board with whom we have counseled, sanction the course taken. It meets the approval of an intelligent portion of the old district. We have aimed to do justice to the children by giving them one of the best schools in town to attend. To consign four or five inoffensive children to a little dismal shop-py looking shelter for sixty days, depriving them of contact with other children, (one of the important advantages of school going), seems more like imprisonment to serve out a sentence than the pursuit of knowledge or happiness, and doubly oppressive when it can be readily avoided. In other parts of the town families are unfavorably located who do not murmur at the inconvenience for which the town is not responsible. We may cling to the arrangements which we have been accustomed to from our infancy with a tenacity that will do our children great injury.

The little Dry Hill school has been an affliction to us, and apparently to parents and pupils. There may be nine or ten children there who should go to school somewhere. Only three came regularly in the fall. The same three attended the first two days of the winter term. The succeeding three days the teacher was the sole occupant of the room. Hence we closed the school for the winter. It would seem almost inhuman to compel the children to go by authority of a truant officer

when the roads are almost impassible, and while they plead that the children are poorly clad. If Dry and Chestnut Hill could be united and two terms kept, spring and fall, when the roads are open, the town furnishing transportation, their condition might be materially improved.

### MILLERS FALLS.

After much deliberation we decided to consolidate the schools at Millers Falls. They were graded, hence could not be united entirely to our satisfaction. Their numerical state (the maximum number during the year being forty-seven) hardly warranted the expense of two. We are not surprised if it did not meet the approval of all in that place. There is said to be such a phenomenon as "what is meat for one is poison for another." We are convinced after a year's trial that it was the best thing to do, under the circumstances.

### TURNERS FALLS.

Additional room at Turners Falls—a not unwelcome demand—is a want that repeats itself about every year. Even with the eleven large rooms now provided we apprehend that with the opening of the spring term the accommodations will be insufficient. When the town shall vote to build another school house, and that time is close at hand, we think the question of disposing of the old building on Second street should be considered. The proceeds of its sale for other purposes will do something toward paying for a new one. It is not well located, the surroundings are not wholesome or attractive, it is not uniform with the other buildings of the place. The town can afford and the schools deserve a better place.

### APPROPRIATIONS.

The town has been liberally disposed in appropriating money for schools. It is pleasant to work with something to do with. Our schools are rapidly increasing in number; let your appropriations increase correspondingly.



## STUDIES.

No radical changes have been made in studies. The tendency every year is toward Normal methods. Recitations are conducted with a view to illustrate the subjects, and test the practical knowledge gained from them, to ascertain whether they are likely to be of utility in the every day affairs and transactions of life, rather than to see if they master so much and so many books. There is a revival in the interest of writing in our schools. Children are being taught to write in a common sense way, and with implements adapted to their capacity. They begin to write simultaneously with reading. Some are ready writers at seven and eight years old, and will be masters of the art when they enter the grammar grade. Teachers, in their zeal to have their pupils acquire a knowledge of the old-fashioned indispensable and practical branches, find it convenient to lose sight of the statute that enjoins instructions in the art of drawing. Yet the desultory attention which has been given it has revealed more talent than was supposed to exist. Singing as an exercise and recreation is almost universal, and has become one of the most attractive features of our school rooms. We have it without money and without price. Very little has been done for it scientifically. Yet the fruits of our limited facilities for its development seems to verify the truth of Lowell Mason's broad assertion that everybody can sing.

## BOOKS.

Every year an unavoidable bill is incurred for books for children whose parents are either unable or unwilling to pay for them. How far the town is reimbursed the subsequent year we have not been advised.

A question suggests itself whether it were not better that the town should furnish and own the primary books. It is a question that has never been discussed here and we offer some of the arguments that present themselves in its favor: 1st. The course has been adopted in some localities and we have seen no protest against it. 2nd. Some members of the State Board recommend it. 3rd. The books would last longer if

put in care of the teachers than as property of the pupils. 4th. There is a general complaint that the children read so long in one reader that they can say it before they are fitted to take next of the series.

Did the town own the books more series could be supplied, and transferred from one school to another. For instance, the 1st and 2nd Franklin, or some other, could be used at Turners Falls two or more terms, the Appleton's or some other could be used at the Centre, and the next two terms be exchanged. Thus the child would read two 1st and two 2nd readers before advancing to the 3rd. These points seem more pertinent, and come with greater force, on account of the apparent burden that the purchase of books inflicts upon those who have large families dependent upon their wages for support.

### CONCLUSION.

Those occupying the most eminent positions are manifesting an awakened interest in education. President Hayes in his messages and public utterances recognizes it as the only means of ameliorating the deplorable state of some sections of the country. Congress has indicated a new interest, in the passage of the bill appropriating a magnificent sum in behalf of public institution of learning. States are everywhere establishing greater varieties of schools for its dissemination. State Boards are in active and intimate relation with superintendents and teachers. The schools of Massachusetts come to us a rich inheritance. Yet they are a trust involving great responsibilities. Every individual is their guardian. If we loose our concern for our common schools we are disloyal to the greatest and best organized institution for education in this or any land.

SEYMOUR ROCKWELL,	}	SCHOOL COMMITTEE.
ISAAC CHENERY,		
WM. S. DANA,		



